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Spy Hunt

There passed virtually without notice last month the 25th "anniversary" of the Senate's condemnation of Joe McCarthy, its arch Red-hunter from 1950 to 1954. McCarthy's turbulent career as an anti-communist began in Wheeling, W. Va., in February 1950, when he assured a Republican assemblage there that he knew of 205 communists still laboring in the Truman administration, none of whom he chose to identify at that time.

Last week in New York City, at a press conference called to promote his book "The Fourth Man," British writer Andrew Boyle proved more modest than McCarthy. Boyle implicated only 30 others in Soviet espionage, also without identifying them, all of whom purportedly served in a spy ring along with the subjects of his book: Guy Burgess; Donald Maclean, Harold "Kim" Philby, Anthony Blunt (the "fourth man"—art historian whose identity Boyle's book exposed) and a "fifth man," whom the author dubbed only "Basil." Boyle assured his audience of journalists: "It goes on and on. I know some of them [the additional 30], but it's not my job to reveal their identities."

How does Boyle "know some of them"? Much of his inside information, according to "The Fourth Man," came from a coven of Deep Throats, retired British or American intelligence officers, as well as from CIA and FBI files obtained (according to Boyle) through the Freedom of Information Act. There is no way to confirm the author's "confidential" information from informant-spooks, but Boyle's FBI and CIA citations can be verified. The results are instructive.

I have read all material released on the Burgess-Maclean-Philby case by both agencies. The CIA release consists of only five documents, copies of which I have. Four are foreign news story transcripts, and the fifth, an expurgated interview with "Kim" Philby and Mrs. Philby in 1951 after Burgess and Maclean had disappeared, contains no new information or disclosures that change earlier accounts of the case.

Nor do the FBI files contain such revelations. More than half the bureau's 3,196 pages of material on the case, long available to researchers at the FBI's reading room, consists of news clips and printed parliamentary debates on the affair. The remainder deals with the FBI's haphazard post-1951 investigation of the American activities of Burgess, Maclean and, to a lesser extent, Philby.

Yet press response to Boyle's book has followed the author himself in stressing the signi-

ficance of these documents. Thus Noel Annan in The Times Literary Supplement: "The power of his book derives from the new source he tapped—the files of the American government agencies, including those of the FBI and CIA, which have been thrown open by the U.S. Freedom of Information Act."

The nonexistence of such revelatory material might be purely academic except that Boyle's "fifth man"—"Basil"—has been widely identified in the British and American press—despite the absence of cogent evidence—as Dr. Wilfrid Basil Mann, 71, a nuclear physicist and a principal scientist at the National Bureau of Standards. When I interviewed Dr. Mann several weeks ago—Boyle never talked to him—he denied having been the Soviet agent "Basil" described in "The Fourth Man" or ever having worked for the Russians.

Boyle argues that between late 1945 and the early fall of 1948, when Maclean left the United States, "Basil" met regularly with Donald Maclean to advise Maclean on which atomic secrets to steal. Yet for much of that time, according to Boyle, "Basil" functioned as a double agent. He had been trapped and then "turned," we are told, by James Angleton, later of the CIA, who (Boyle alleges) never told the British about either Maclean or "Basil."

But Dr. Mann has produced his passport and other personal records to show that he left the United States in September 1945, returning only in late December 1948, months after Maclean's departure. Moreover, according to Dr. Mann, he never met Donald Maclean. Nor do the FBI and CIA files corroborate Boyle's elaborate theory, which relies in the end entirely upon "confidential" information from his unidentified sources in the intelligence community.

Boyle's book does contain personal data on "Basil" comparable with some aspects of Dr. Mann's background. Although Boyle himself has not publicly made the identification, neither has he corrected those journalists who did.

"My name's Boyle, not McCarthy," the author told his press conference last week. "I am not in favor of witch hunts." For that very reason, Boyle might wish to resolve the unsettled matter of the "fifth man" before pursuing publicly further revelations of Numbers 6 through 35. Has Boyle any really cogent evidence identifying the Soviet agent he calls "Basil" as Dr. Wilfrid Basil Mann? If so, he should produce it and counter Dr. Mann's denials. If not he might wish to indicate that fact to the journalists who have somehow linked Dr. Mann to Boyle's Basil.

Both in Andrew Boyle's England and in this writer's America, there is a serviceable word to describe the activities of the "fourth man," Anthony Blunt: treason. There is an equally serviceable word to describe allegations of treason without cogent evidence: McCarthyism.

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